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VIA U.S. MAIL & EMAIL

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Subject:       Comments on Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Planning  
Grant Proposal #5038, Bay Area IRWMP, submitted by the State Coastal  
Conservancy

Dear Ms. Billington and Ms. Farahnak:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the evaluation of the State Coastal Conservancy's planning grant proposal. The Coastal Conservancy and the many participating Bay Area agencies, cities, counties, environmental groups, and other entities supporting the IRWMP process are very pleased with the generally positive evaluation and recommendation for full funding of the grant.

There has been a tremendous effort on the part of many, diverse Bay Area groups to develop an IRWMP that includes the entire Bay Area. Past planning grant workshops suggested that large regional efforts, such as the collective Bay Area, were the objective of the Proposition 50 grants. Our planning team faces several challenges owing to the complexities associated with organizing a planning effort across a large geographic region, but even more difficult is planning across a landscape with a multitude of agencies and jurisdictions.

Since submission of our proposal several major accomplishments have been realized that, had they occurred earlier, may have shown better compliance with some of the scoring criteria. It is useful to bring some of these recent accomplishments to your attention.

1. **Public Participation and Agency Coordination:** The Watershed Management and Habitat Protection and Restoration Team established a Plan Development Committee to guide the development of the Watershed Plan, including the public participation aspect. This committee has an open membership. In addition, two well attended public workshops were conducted to solicit and strengthen stakeholder support for this section of the plan. Participating stakeholders included several public planning, regulatory, and water agencies; environmental advocates, watershed groups, and other non-profit and non-governmental organizations. These workshops initiated an ongoing effort to bring together Bay Area interests and build consensus among people who have never been assembled in such a common cause before. Finally, three of a larger series of presentations about the project have been made to local entities, to ensure that public officials, environmental justice and other organizations are aware of this project, and to encourage broader participation.
2. **Refined Project Objective:** As a result of our team's public workshop process we were able to refine our project vision and objectives to better reflect interests around the Bay. Attached is a summary memo describing the Bay Area IRWMP's planning framework for watershed management, resulting from the public workshops.
3. **Consideration of Environmental Impacts:** Please note that our project implementation schedule will consider all necessary CEQA documentation as needed for each project supported by the Bay regional IRWMP. This consideration of CEQA needs has been integrated into our workplan and IRWMP document outline.
4. **Data Coordination Across Region:** Our project team is coordinating closely with the Upland Goals Project, the Bay Area Open Space Council, the S.F. Bay Estuary Project and others to ensure that there is an efficient coordination of data collection and data sharing. Our project team is committed to not duplicate the effort of others, but rather builds in parallel with these other efforts.
5. The web portal, [www.bayareawatershedplan.net](http://www.bayareawatershedplan.net), has been launched to facilitate planning, environmental information exchange, communication, sharing, analysis, and decision support. The portal will eventually include integrated WebGIS and a project database and creation tool.

These recent project advances have required much time, effort, and cooperation among multiple agencies and participants. Moving forward, adequate funding is essential to continue to build upon these efforts to create an effective Bay Area IRWMP.

In conclusion, we thank DWR and State Board staff for your continuous efforts in managing the grant program. We are also grateful for your positive endorsement of our proposal and our selection as a funding candidate. As described above, we support the

staff recommendation to fund our proposed program on two general principles: (1) the great size, complexity, and importance of our Bay Area region and its need for integrated water resource management; and (2) continued progress towards developing a successful Bay Area IRWMP as described in our project vision, planning framework, and overall technical approach.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nadine Hitchcock  
Manager, San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program